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ABSTRACT

An alarming rate of out-of-school suspensions prompted the establishment of an alternative program for students at Tarboro High School, Tarboro, North Carolina. The internal suspension program was instituted to reduce school suspensions and improve the academic performance of suspended students. The program utilized a full-time detention center located in the school and coordinated by an internal suspension coordinator. The program was considered highly successful in reducing the number of out-of-school suspensions and moderately successful in improving the academic performance of students assigned to the internal suspension program. (Author/JM)

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Establishing An Alternative Suspension Program

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PREFACE

The management of human resources is one of the single most important responsibilities of the school administrator. Valuable instructional time lost by students suspended from school for disciplinary reasons and the time required of the principal in handling disciplinary problems account for a considerable waste of human potential. This practicum was conducted in response to the growing number of out-of-school suspensions. An internal suspension program was implemented to provide an alternative to preserve this wasted effort. The development of skills and attitudes of teachers and administrators dealing with student discipline was an important component of the practicum. The writer analyzes the effects of the internal suspension program and offers recommendations for refining the program to better meet the needs of students who have trouble coping with the regular school program.

CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF NEED AND OBJECTIVES

Identification of Problem/Need

Discipline remains a crucial issue in public education and is generally viewed as the single greatest problem in the classroom. Few alternatives to traditional disciplinary measures have emerged, despite many in-depth examinations of the problem. As a consequence, school administrators have continued to rely on the traditional methods, especially suspension from school, as a means of maintaining discipline and control in the school. The rationale for this method of punishment seems to be that the disobedient child so disciplined will begin to conform to accepted norms of behavior.

Many high schools utilize external suspensions as the sole penalty for most disciplinary problems. Sometimes the variation in discipline procedures is only in terms of the length of suspension, with no attention given to the cause of the transgression. There is a tragic irony in the denial of further instruction to students who are already experiencing learning difficulties due to academic and social frustration. Another current practice is to lower the academic grade of the student as a means of discipline. Failure of such techniques indicates a serious need to re-examine disciplinary procedures.

Tarboro High School is located in the small town of Tarboro, in eastern North Carolina and has an enrollment of 1,050 students in grades 9-12. During the 1976-77 school year, 80 pupils in grades 9-12 were suspended, totaling 351 student days absent from school. During the first semester of

the 1977-78 school year, 162 were suspended for a total of 861 student days. All of the suspensions were made out-of-school or off school premises. In addition to the out-of-school suspensions, three students were expelled from school.

It should be noted that during the 1976-77 school year, ninth grade students in Tarboro City Schools were assigned to a junior high school, organized 7-9. The schools were reorganized during the summer of 1977, and ninth grade students were assigned to the four year high school organized 9-12. While records are not available to accurately substantiate the claim, information available suggests that at least forty percent of the suspensions affected ninth graders, a substantial increase over the number the previous year in the junior high school.

Few alternatives were available to the administration in either of the periods cited above. Many weaknesses are inherent in the student suspension procedure. A few of these are given below:

1. Students miss all work while suspended; few teachers are willing to help students catch up on work missed during their suspension.
2. Students cause community problems while out of school.
3. Students are suspended from the entire school program, when sometimes their difficulties are in only one or two areas.
4. Some students feel that an external suspension means several days of freedom, and try to get themselves suspended. (The writer knows of actual cases, at Tarboro High School, of students asking teachers what they needed to do to merit a "three-day vacation.")
5. Students establish a school conduct record (through the documentation necessary for suspension) which follows them through their school careers.
6. The student's alienation is further reinforced by physical exclusion.

It is apparent from the data presented that a need existed in Tarboro High School to arrest a growing problem. Student suspensions were accelerating,

and the students involved were depriving themselves of educational opportunities available to them. Furthermore, the suspension process was depriving other students of educational leadership by absorbing an enormous amount of administrative time which could otherwise be devoted to more positive program development for the benefit of all students. Student potential was being wasted by the immature actions of students who were denied attendance.

It is the opinion of the writer and others that students cannot be held totally responsible for their actions if one seriously considers the effects of home and community environment and, in some cases, the classroom environment provided by some teachers. The school must assume some of the responsibility for this problem and effect methods of coping with, improving, and eradicating it.

Objectives

The design of this practicum was to plan and implement alternative strategies for dealing with the problem of administering student discipline. The practicum attempted to meet the following objectives:

1. To reduce the number of initial suspensions from 185 to 93, a reduction of 50 percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978
2. To reduce the number of repeated suspensions from ten to seven, a reduction of 25 percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978
3. To reduce the amount of time students spend out of school due to suspensions from 10.34 days to 5.17, a reduction of 50 percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the

period from February 1978 to June 1978

4. To improve the academic grade point average of suspended students from .59 to .64, an increase of ten percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature was made to see what other school systems are doing in the area of school discipline. Specific emphasis was placed on alternative programs to traditional disciplinary procedures. A brief description of the findings is described below.

A project initiated by the Virginia Beach City Schools (1) is based on in-school suspension which incorporates strict disciplinary rules for students who are suspended from regular classes. The in-school coordinator is totally responsible for students who are referred, and emphasis is placed on behavior modification through increased student responsibility. A contract is made between the student and the ISS coordinator to accomplish stated objectives.

According to Messrs.' Harvey and Moosha of Virginia Beach, much that has been done in the name of discipline in schools has been rationalized as being "good for the child". However, by depriving him of all or parts of the instructional program we are not acting in his best interest. Many students are encouraged by such methods to drop out of school and seek life experience outside of the regular forms of schooling.

Both schools participating in the Virginia Beach program experienced a marked reduction in the total number of suspensions during the 1975-76 school year. The reduction in the number of repeat suspensions was especially dramatic. Without exception, every parent in for a conference with the assistant principal and the coordinator of ISS preferred the in-school suspension to the out-of-school system. The in-school suspension system offered a bridge instead

of a break in the educational process, and as such, broadened the curriculum for a selected group of students.

The Greensboro Youth Services program (2) has similar objectives but provides tutorial services and involves others in a guidance component. Unlike the Virginia Beach program, it provides for earned free time for students who demonstrate good behavior. The program description states that ISS is trying to imitate life. Volunteers assist the coordinator in working individually with ISS students. Staff and volunteer training is an important component of the program. A comprehensive organization involves faculty, volunteers and administrators on an ISS board. Community agency representatives serve as resource persons for ISS personnel. The Greensboro model suggests two ISS classrooms adequately equipped with educational materials and audiovisual aids. The program requires complete involvement of staff and community.

High Point Schools (3) calls its program "Character Oriented Optional Learning" (COOL). The objectives center on improving math skills, improving overall behavior, reducing suspensions, improving attendance, and improving attitudes. The project is in the developmental stage in three junior high schools. Parent education is an essential component of the program. A home-school coordinator is a vital link in reducing disciplinary problems. A multitude of alternative teaching-learning techniques and strategies is employed in the alternative Learning Centers.

Project Adjust (4) is a product of Chapel Hill-Carboro City Schools. Project staff assists teachers in identifying inappropriate behavior patterns and work together to exhaust all options of dealing with the problem situation within the context of the regular classroom. When attempts within the regular classroom prove unsuccessful, a referral by the teacher may be made to the school-based committee for special services. Placement in a resource classroom

is an important option available to the committee. Classroom teachers are kept informed by the project staff and assist the resource staff with assignments.

Project PAL (5) is an effort of Fayetteville City Schools. Facets of the program include individual and group counseling, tutoring in academic subjects, eliciting diagnostic or supportive services as needed, and short and long-range follow-up services. An alternative educator and an aide staff each of five schools. The staffs devote their time to assisting suspended students with their regular assignments; involving students in group counseling ; consulting with parents, other staff members and community agencies; securing the services of consultants and volunteers; making referrals and evaluating and reporting progress. Students are assigned to PAL by the principal or his designee following a group conference with the student, parent, and other personnel deemed necessary. The number of days assigned depends upon the infraction and its seriousness, the student's understanding of the rule, age of student, and circumstances surrounding the incident. The requirements of PAL are fully explained and a commitment to abide by the rules received from the students and their parents.

PASS, "Positive Alternative to Student Suspensions"(6) was developed in St. Petersburg, Florida in 1972-74 and is a nationally validated project. The purpose of the PASS program is to provide intervention strategies designed to prevent or minimize nonproductive social behavior of secondary students. Major activities of the PASS program include: individual and group consultations that assist school faculties in developing techniques for dealing effectively with teenage students; affective education and personal development programs for students and teachers; timeout rooms managed by a teacher or paraprofessional where students talk out problems and complete academic assignments; individual

and group counseling for students experiencing serious interpersonal confrontations, and counseling for their parents. PASS is a total school effort involving staff development in humanistic processes. Humanistic activities are employed in the regular classroom. Basic encounter sessions are scheduled once per week for twelve weeks where developmental group counseling and other applied behavioral science techniques are used. Basic encounter sessions are also used for school personnel. Parent training groups utilize the techniques and principles of Parent Effectiveness Training. Students' school and home survival courses are designed for those who have experienced frequent behavioral problems. Project PASS stresses the importance of an adequately prepared staff. The project has made significant gains in reducing suspensions.

Roy Mendez of Rosenburg, Texas wrote in the NASSP Bulletin about the importance of making the disciplinary process meaningful and disciplining. According to Mendez, (7) the rationale supporting every disciplinary action is twofold. First, the action should attempt to modify the individual's future behavior. Second, it must protect others in the school environment. In-school suspension satisfies the above requirements and adds a third dimension by protecting the community from delinquent behavior that might occur during the unsupervised time of regular suspension.

A large portion of the disciplinary action in suspension school occurs through the process of isolation. This isolation from regular classes, friends, and school activities is an effective technique for discipline. A suspension program must try to develop the student's self-concept and motivation. Parent communication is an integral part of the program. It is important to emphasize that suspension school is a disciplinary alternative.

Mr. Mosley of Franklinton, N. C. (8) proposed an alternative learning center in Franklinton City Schools which focuses on isolation in a controlled

setting, opportunities for students to earn their way back to the regular classroom, and continuation of studies while in in-school suspension.

A Special Assignment Class (SAC) (9) was implemented in the Goose Creek district in 1971. Facilities for SAC were located in the district's media center which adjoins one of the junior high campuses. The program employs a supervisor who is responsible for coordinating all in-school suspensions. The program stresses early parent notification. Students are placed on a strict schedule and are responsible for getting to the class. SAC has been praised and criticized. Criticism is received for the reasons for assignment to the class and not of the class itself. The major criticism of the class structure is that some have claimed it to be a "little prison" with too few privileges and too rigid discipline. Praise for SAC has come from school patrons because the class has made advantageous use of student time; students are doing teacher-made assignments instead of wasting their time.

In the past, efforts to improve discipline at Knoxville Junior High School in Pittsburgh included a low ratio of assistant principals and counselors; expanded reading, tutoring, and inservice programs; an elaborate club program; and an infusion of federal funds. Still the suspension spiral persisted. A Learning Adjustment Center (LAC) was organized to correct the problem. The LAC provides a restricted environment which involves isolation and regimentation. The supervising teachers have demonstrated competence in individualizing learning, and they emphasize remediation. Each student is seen by his counselor and is involved in daily group work. Students regard three days in LAC as more disagreeable than three days off at home, thus enhancing its disciplinary effectiveness. During the first year of operation, the suspension rate was reduced by 50 percent.

Creative Discipline (10) reports on a school in southern California which

conducted Saturday School in lieu of suspensions. The number of suspensions was reduced from 500 to 35 per year because of this program. Instead of maintaining a detention type of Saturday School, the program's purpose is to provide presentations with general educational value to the students. Teachers in the school are asked to submit an outline of a topic they would be interested in handling for a four hour session. School officials reported that the program saved money by keeping students in school and thus earning their prorated dollars which are based on average daily attendance.

Mr. Meares and Mr. Kittle, (11) in examining the practices of out-of-school suspensions, in light of the requirements Goss v. Lopez, give the following advantages of in-house suspension:

1. While the student is in the suspension room he does his usual assignments provided by his regular classroom teacher under the supervision and guidance of the suspension room teacher.

2. Students are in the school building for the entire day, rather than roaming around the community.

3. Students may be suspended from any number of classes- in-school suspension is not an "all or nothing" proposition. For this reason, it is easy to remove students temporarily from only those in which they are having severe difficulties, while allowing them to pursue the rest of their regular program.

4. Getting suspended loses much of its appeal when students realize that they will be supervised and required to do their work instead of being "set free".

5. Students can be returned to classes from which they have been suspended, at the discretion of the administrator and suspension room teacher, without the need for formal reinstatement with parents present.

6. Students are available so that the school may best use its support services team to help toward solution of the problems which resulted in the suspension.

7. Formal documentation is unnecessary and the student therefore avoided the establishment of an ongoing record that could adversely affect his school career.

8. The school does not perpetuate the student's alienation by excluding him physically.

9. The school continues to receive state aide for the student through average daily attendance.

The Sacremento City Unified School District established a Guidance clinic (12) in each secondary school in 1969. The GC was established to provide an alternative to the routine procedure for dealing with disruptive students. Two types of referrals are made to GC: (1) the short-term or "cooling off" referral for which no program is required and (2) the long-term or "unconditional" referral for which a program is developed. Each GC is staffed with counselors and a consulting psychologist. The GC's were successful in decreasing the number of suspensions and making effective changes in student behavior.

Summary and Rationale

A review of the programs cited reveals that there are many common characteristics among them. One or more of the following characteristics or components are included in alternative discipline programs:

1. Strict disciplinary rules are required in in-school suspension room
2. In-school suspension room is supervised by a professional or a paraprofessional
3. Students receive some form of guidance while in in-school suspension
4. The program gives students an opportunity to earn free time for good behavior
5. Volunteers are used in tutoring or interaction
6. Staff training which emphasizes teaching and behavior modification techniques is provided
7. The entire school staff is involved to some degree
8. Community agencies are utilized to solve student-school-family problems
9. Parents are involved in the disciplinary process
10. Contracts are signed by the students
11. At least one room is utilized exclusively for in-school suspension

12. Isolation of students to some degree is practiced

13. Measures are taken to intervene before a student disciplinary problem becomes severe

14. Students are required to complete regular class assignments while assigned to in-school suspension

15. In-school suspension may be full-time or part-time, depending on the nature of the behavior and who it affects

CHAPTER THREE

CONDUCTING THE PRACTICUM

The alarming rate of out-of-school suspensions at Tarboro High School detailed in chapter one prompted the writer to search for a solution to this growing problem. The school principal had previously requested assistance in this area, but resources had not been available to provide the additional personnel needed. At about the same time that the writer was investigating other possibilities, the State Department of Human Resources began a program called "Community Based Alternatives". While the major concern of the Department was to provide opportunities for troubled youth presenting problems to local communities, a local task force made an impressive appeal to the agency to fund a program to improve school attendance.

The writer worked with agency personnel in developing a proposal to partially fund an internal suspension program for Tarboro High School. The local board of education was convinced that the need was sufficient to warrant funding the balance of the program from local funds for at least one semester. The proposal was approved in December 1977 and funding was available in January 1978, in time to implement the program at the beginning of the second semester.

Out of a recognized need and some initiative on the part of the writer and through the cooperation of the school principal, this practicum was developed and initiated.

The purpose of the practicum was to provide an alternative program for students who were suspended from classes in the regular school program. The alternative selected was an internal suspension program to be operated within the

school.

Internal suspension (IS) is a punitive measure employed by the principal for disciplinary problems which require action not normally administered by the classroom teacher. In contrast to detention which may be administered by the classroom teacher, without the principal's approval, for minor infraction, IS is used for behaviors which would normally result in out-of-school suspension.

The decision was made to staff the IS program with a full-time person with college training but without the required teacher certification. The lack of funds dictated this decison even though the writer felt that a trained teacher was needed.

Additional decisions were made to insure that the program would include a positive approach to dicsipline rather than a negative one while maintaining a strict code of discipline. Cooperation between the principal, IS coordinator and the guidance department was stressed in the planning sessions. Staff development activities were planned for the principal-coordinator- counselor team as well as the referring teachers to develop skills and attitudes in identifying behavior problems and methods of dealing effectively with them. The parents of affected students also had a part in the planning process. Interviews were held with a number of parents to ascertain their attitudes on student discipline and their opinions on how the IS could be operated effectively. School officials used this valuable information gained from teachers and parents in establishing general philosophy and rules and regulations by which the program would operate.

The writer, with the assistance of the principal, developed a tentative outline of program criteria prior to the implementation of the program. As a basis for giving some structure to the IS program, certain additional decisions were made. Specifically, the decision to place a student in IS was reserved for the

principal and the assistant principal after a conference with the student and the referring teacher. The IS room was to provide for isolation of students from the entire regular program for periods of one to ten days. Only those students who would normally be suspended from school would be assigned to IS. Students would be assigned for the entire day, arriving for assignment before other students start classes and leaving after other students leave classes. Part-time suspension would not be a component of IS and IS students would be required to remain in suspension for the entire number of assigned days, without opportunity to earn a reduction in time. Students would be required to complete regular class assignments prepared by regular teachers and coordinated with the IS coordinator. Parent conferences would be required and, if necessary, conferences involving parents, teachers, counselors, and principal would be held. At least two guidance sessions would be conducted during the IS period by one of the counselors. Two internal suspensions would be used before a student was given out-of-school suspension unless the behavior was such as to warrant exclusion from school to protect the safety and welfare of the school, in which case out-of-school suspension would be automatic.

An explanation of the reasons for employing the components listed above is in order. The following rationale is offered:

1. Most successful programs utilize a separate in-school suspension room which provides for some degree of isolation and an individualized program.
2. Students are placed in the program for disciplinary purposes after other attempts by the classroom teachers have failed.
3. The program has limited funding and some desirable components which involve expenditures for personnel and equipment must be omitted.

4. Utilization of existing staff, such as counselors, appears to be more feasible than establishing a separate disciplinary department.
5. In-service training of staff is necessary since teachers are unfamiliar with this disciplinary process.
6. Students referred to IS are likely to be those who are having academic difficulty as well. Therefore, the requirement that they complete regular classwork is an important ingredient and should take precedent over character building classes. Behavior modification techniques will be employed by the IS coordinator during his interaction with the students, and this will be enhanced by the counselor conferences.

The following information was developed for distribution to all faculty members during the month of January 1978 prior to the employment of the IS coordinator:

INTERNAL SUSPENSION

Purpose: The purpose of this program is to enable the school to provide temporary placement within the school for those pupils involved in misbehavior that would normally result in out-of-school suspension. The pupils placed on "in-school suspension" would not be considered to be dangerous to themselves or others in the school situation.

Development: Tarboro High School would develop a program designed to meet the needs of its students and faculty. These plans would be faculty-administrator developed.

Program: This program is to be a positive approach to discipline, rather than a negative approach. The object is to reduce the number of traditional-type suspensions at Tarboro High School. Our program would have two functions: 1) behavior modification; 2) holding or detention as a punishment for the students behavior. Our goal shall be to incorporate behavior modification techniques coupled with individual or group counseling and academic tutoring. Time spent, by the student, in this program will vary from a minimum of

one period to an indefinite placement depending upon the student's attitude, performance and behavior during the suspension period.

Procedure: (1) Students may be referred by classroom teachers for possible placement, however, placement would be made by the administration. (2) Students would report to the designated center at 8:20 a.m. and remain there for the prescribed period of time. If it be a full day, the student would have lunch before or after the scheduled lunch time and break before or after the scheduled break time. (3) Only students would be assigned to this center that would normally be given out-of-school suspension. (4) Study materials and assignments would be gathered by the center staff member. Each teacher involved would check with the center staff member during her planning period to determine if there are any subject matter questions or difficulties. (5) During the "in-school" suspension a student-parent conference would be a must and if necessary the teacher or teachers involved. (6) At least two guidance sessions will be conducted during the "in-school" suspension with the guidance counselors. (7) Two in-school suspensions would be conducted along with two parent conferences before the out-door suspension or traditional-type suspension is invoked.

Beliefs: (1) This approach to suspension and discipline would develop a positive change in the behavior and attitude of the student. (2) Many discipline problems arise with the weak student, and with the use of this method the student will not be penalized from an academic point of view as he has been by the traditional-type suspension. (3) Parental support will be fostered and interest in the school program will increase when they learn that their children are not being released from school on "out-door" suspension for infractions of school rules. This method will permit the student to continue his education and avoid being placed on the street. (4) Classroom teachers will be permitted to suggest center placement for pupils that disrupt their classroom. (5) This program will give the teacher an opportunity to provide meaningful educational experiences for those pupils that are willing and want to learn. (6) Will provide the administration alternatives to the traditional-type suspension. (6) Will provide the administration with more latitude to determine the best possible course of action for the individual pupil. (8) The center staff person could be used as a tutor and at times as a home-bound coordinator when needed and time permits.

Teachers were given further opportunity for participation in the development of the program before the project was implemented. Their input was incorporated into a set of Rules for Students which was subsequently distributed to all students at Tarboro High School just prior the end of the first semester. The following rules were adopted:

1. Absolutely no talking except to the coordinator.
2. No gum or snacks.
3. Ample supplies and materials must be brought to the center each morning along with all textbooks that have been issued.
4. If library material is needed the student will inform the coordinator and he will pick up the material needed.
5. The student must report at 8:20 in the morning and remain until 3:05 each afternoon.
6. There is to be no contact with other students during the day and each student, in the center, is forbidden to participate in any school function.
7. All assigned work will be completed and turned in to the coordinator. This work must be neat and complete or else it is to be done over. After the coordinator has accepted the assignment it will then be turned over to the subject teacher for grading and/or recording.
8. Students are to be working at all times on appropriate subject matter assigned by the subject teacher.
9. All IS students will eat lunch at 1:15 with the coordinator and return to the IS center.
10. Students will leave the school grounds immediately when dismissed from the IS center at 3:05.

During the month of January 1978 additional activities were scheduled to aid in the implementation of the IS program. The major concern of the administration was the employment of a qualified IS coordinator. Such a person was ultimately employed. The candidate lacked only one semester being certified for teaching. He possessed many of the competencies for working with high school school youth but lacked specific training for the job. During the brief period he was associated with the program he gained knowledge and skills for his job assignment through locally organized workshops and visits to other internal suspension sites. He proved to be a competent, contributing member of the staff.

Staff development activities for the high school faculty were planned and implemented during the period January through April 1978. The primary impetus for staff training was given by the director of instruction with the aid of state department of education consultants.

The workshop consisted of sixteen hours of instruction, scheduled in two-hour sessions after school every two weeks. Fifty-six teachers attended the workshop.

The director of instruction, the assistant principal, the IS coordinator, and the writer attended a seminar conducted by John Kackley, Coordinating Psychologist, Pinellas County School Board, coordinator of project PASS (Positive Alternative to Student Learning). The theoretical principles of PASS were incorporated into the Tarboro program although the methods of operation were decidedly different.

The major thrust of staff development activities was to change attitudes in human behavior and to devleop knowledge and skills in behavior modification. The following outline of staff development was presented during the training process:

1. Humanistic activities in the classroom - an introduction
2. A study of discipline problems
3. Preventing discipline problems
   a. Developing a close relationship with students
   b. Helping students improve their relationship with each other
   c. Helping students improve their relationships with their families
   d. Student involvement
   e. Helping students meet their physical needs

4. Dealing with discipline problems
   a. Conflict: ways of dealing with it
   b. Techniques
      (1) Adler's approach
      (2) Behavior contracting
      (3) Behavior modification
      (4) Change the environment
      (5) Corporal punishment
      (6) Curriculum or conflict management
      (7) Democratic problem solving
      (8) Glasser's approach
      (9) Police, courts, and training schools
      (10) Referral
      (11) Social literacy
      (12) Suspension policies
      (13) Transactional analysis
5. Internal suspension - philosophy and operational procedures
6. Techniques in working with the slow learner
7. Learning centers and teacher-made materials

In addition to the formal staff development activities outlined above, professional library materials were made available for teacher and staff use. A reference section was established in the school library for teacher use. A consultant in the Division of Human Relations of the State Department of Education met with all principals to discuss the humanistic approach to student discipline and provided materials for their use and study.

A separate room was provided in the adminstrative area of the school for

exclusive use for the internal suspension program. The room was conveniently located for ready access and supervision by the principal and assistant principal and was near the guidance department. Although lacking in space and somewhat inconvenient to the library, the facility was adequate for the program and convenient for teachers and others who dealt with the program.

Only very basic supplies, paper and pencil items, were provided for the IS room. The basic responsibility for the student was retained by the classroom teachers and regular assignments were required to be completed by the students while they were in IS referral. Thus, enrichment and individual interest activities were limited except to the extent provided through regular library check-out which was available to the IS students. The availability of only the necessary basic supplies was consistent with the adopted philisophy of a strict and structured program.

The disciplinary referral process was essentially unchanged with the implementation of the internal suspension program. The teacher's responsibility ended with the referral to the principal or the assistant principal. Either the principal or his assistant interviewed the student and determined whether the student's action warranted referral to IS or some other alternative available to the principal. Theoretically, referral to IS was based on the same criteria as previously used for out-of-school suspension. However, as will be noted in the chapter on evaluation, there was an inconstant application of this principle.

If a determination was made to refer a student to IS, the IS coordinator was given a copy of the referral form and a copy was provided for the guidance department. The IS coordinator contacted the referring teacher to gather more information on the student and his problem to aid in his program with the

student. In many cases a joint conference between the IS coordinator, the referring teacher and the guidance counselor was conducted to plan a program of counseling and rehabilitation for the student. Additionally, the IS coordinator communicated with other teachers to arrange for assignments and study for the student while he was assigned to IS. Arrangements were made between the IS coordinator and the guidance counselor for counseling sessions with the student. Emphasis throughout was given to coordination and communications among those involved with the student's educational program from the point of referral to the time of his return to the regular classroom.

An average of twelve students per day were assigned to IS. The number varied from a low of two students on the first day of operation to a high of 22 students near the end of the semester. The controlled environment was a deterrant to the behavior for which students were assigned to IS. First offenders appeared to take the assignment seriously and "took their medicine" in stride while habitual troublemakers at first objected to the strict code and tried to avoid the confinement. Most of these finally accepted the situation and "pulled their term". Four students were suspended from school for refusing to go to IS. The small number of repeaters attests to the effectiveness of IS as a disciplinary procedure.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION

Two bases were used in evaluating the practicum. First, comparative data were applied in measuring the results of the four major objectives. Second, a subjective approach was used to evaluate the conduct of the practicum and the overall benefits of the practicum. From the data presented one might conclude that the more practical benefits derived from the practicum were significantly more meaningful than the results of pure numerical values.

A clear definition of suspension is needed in the presentation of data. In the strictest sense, suspension, as used for reporting purposes in North Carolina public schools, is the removal of a student form the school for a designated period of time. In-school suspension is not considered since a student is not absent from school and, in the Tarboro project, is permitted to receive full credit for all work completed. The writer will identify both in-school and out-of-school suspensions but will use only out-of-school suspensions for comparative purposes.

An evaluation of the four major objectives is presented as follows:

Objective 1: To reduce the number of initial suspensions from 185 to 93, a reduction of 50 percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978

The two periods of comparison are the first and second semesters of the 1977-78 school year. During the first semester out-of-school suspension was the only alternative available in cases requiring the removal of students from the regular classroom. Internal suspension was added as an alternative at the

beginning of the second semester. During the second semester the principal could determine which alternative was most appropriate for the student's action.

For the period September through January of the 1977-78 school year, 185 suspensions were administered. Eight hundred sixty-one days were missed by suspended students for an average of 4.65 days per suspension. Three students were expelled from school in the first semester. Of the students suspended, 114 were male and 48 were female.

During the second semester of the same year, ten students were suspended from school for a total of 53 days. No students were expelled from school. However, it should be reported that during this period, 250 students were assigned to internal suspension for a total of 1116 days. The average number of days in internal suspension was 4.46. The number consisted of 141 males and 57 females.

The number of out-of-school suspensions was reduced by 95 percent with the implementation of internal suspension. To this extent, the program was highly successful in meeting Objective Number 1.

The results for Objective Number 1 would be incomplete, however, without further analysis of total suspension from the regular classroom. Classroom suspensions were grouped according to types of behavior which prompted referral by the teacher. The following data give a profile of reasons for referral:

REFERRAL PROFILE

Reason for Referral	First Semester No.	% of Total	Second Semester No.	% of Total	Percent Change
Detention violation	16	8.7	75	30.0	+368.7
Profanity	10	5.4	12	4.8	+ 20.0
Tardiness	11	6.0	3	1.2	- 72.7
Skipping class/school	43	23.2	79	31.6	+ 83.7
Fighting	32	17.3	14	5.6	- 56.2
Smoking	25	13.5	22	8.8	- 12.0
Disrupting class/school	33	17.8	26	10.4	- 21.2
Gambling	1	.5	6	2.4	+500.0
Destruction of property	2	1.1	2	.8	0.0
Drugs/alcohol	9	4.9	1	.4	- 88.9
Theft	3	1.6	2	.8	- 33.2
Playing	0	0	8	3.2	+ ----
Totals	185	100.0	250	100.0	

From the data given above, one might conclude that internal suspension was most effective in curbing the more disruptive forms of behavior. The dramatic increase in detention violations and the substantial increase in skipping should be of some concern, but it does not provide cause for alarm. The large percentage increase in gambling was attributable to six students. There appeared bo be a tendency to make more referrals for minor infractions, and there was a definite trend in the use of internal suspension for a "catch-all" and an easy solution for the principal.

No attempt was made to ascertain the causes for the noticeable increase in detention and skipping violations. However, it can again be assumed that the tendency was to use internal suspension as a sole deterrant to these "minor" infractions.

If one considers that the major purpose of internal suspension is to help students in school and to have a more positive effect on student behavior, it can be concluded that the IS program had a positive impact at Tarboro High School. The internal suspension program was highly successful in meeting Objective Number 1.

Objective 2: To reduce the number of repeated suspensions from ten to seven, a reduction of 25 percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978

During the first semester 12.4 percent of the students suspended were administered repeat suspensions. During the second semester only ten students were suspended from school, and none of these repeated out-of-school suspension. The internal suspension program was successful in meeting the objective by reducing the number of repeated suspensions by 100 percent.

Internal suspension was not so successful in curbing repetition in the program itself. Two hundred fifty suspensions were administered to 198 students for a repeat rate of 20.8 percent. The writer suggests that internal suspension was not an effective deterrant to reducing all types of behavior problems and that some students did not view as IS as a serious matter. The writer observed a definite weakness in the guidance component and attributes the number of repeat assignments to a lack of adequate counseling during the period of time students were assigned to internal suspension. There was a greater tendency for teachers to refer for minor offenses to rid the classroom of undesirable behavior.

The writer concludes that the program was successful in meeting Objective Number 2 but was unsuccessful in sorting out the kinds of behavior which warranted exclusion from the regular classroom.

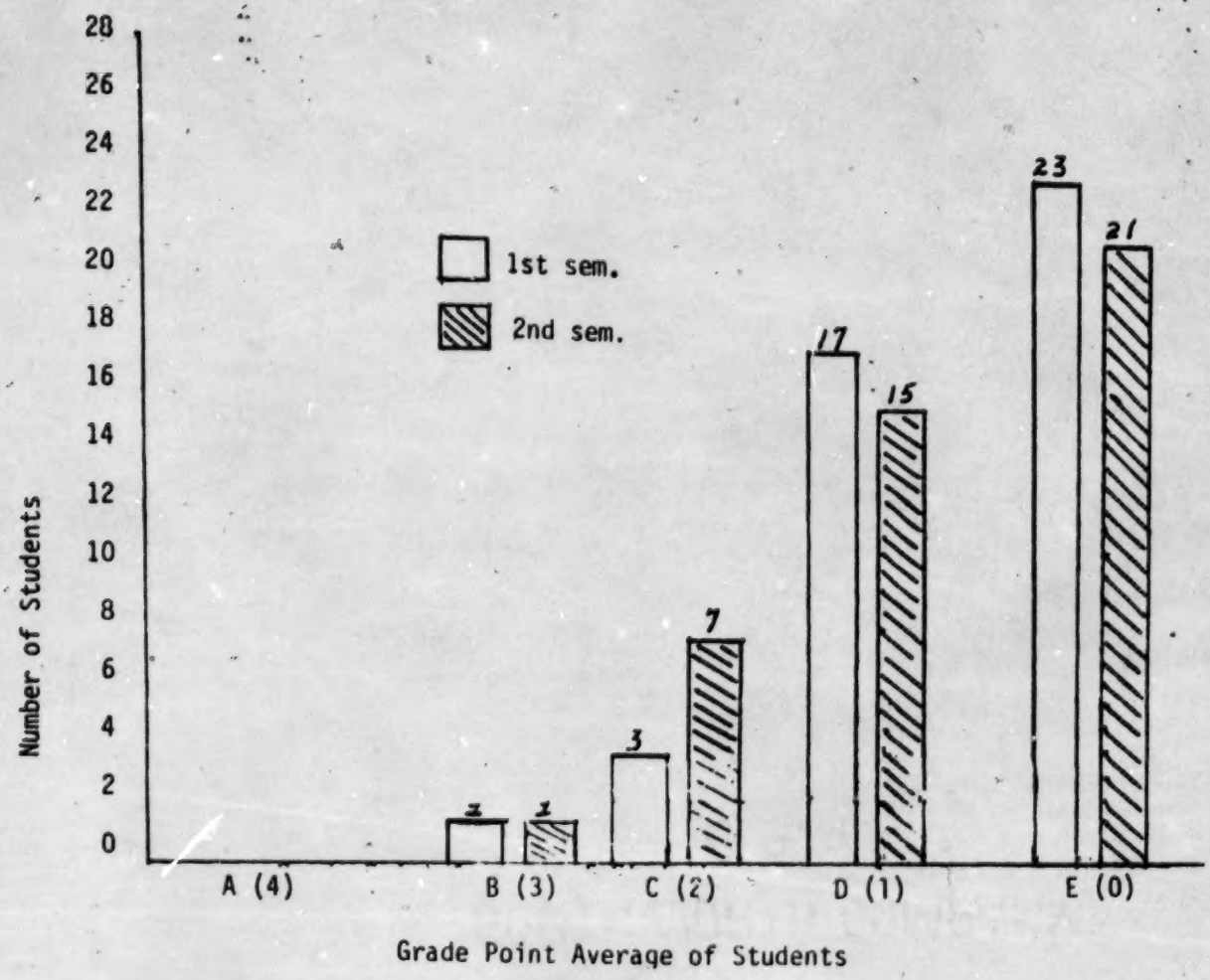
Objective 3: To reduce the amount of time students spend out of school due to suspensions from 10.34 days to 5.17, a reduction of 50 percent, from the period September 1977 to Janaury 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978

Students suspended during the first semester of the 1977-78 school year were absent for an average of 10.34 days each compared with an absence rate among these students of 6.02 during the second semester. Internal suspension contributed to a decrease of 41.78 percent in absenteeism. The writer concludes that Objective Number 3 was not met in numerical percentage. However, school attendance was substantially improved with the alternative suspension program.

Objective 4: To improve the academic grade point average of suspended students from .59 to .64, an increase of ten percent, from the period September 1977 to January 1978 compared with the period from February 1978 to June 1978

Fifty seven students were suspended during the first semester and referred to internal suspension during the second semester. Of these, 13 dropped out of school in their second semester, leaving a total of 44 students for whom grade point averages were compared. The graph which follows provides a comparison of grades received by these students. It should be noted that a vast majority of the students suspended during the first semester and referred to internal suspension during the second semester achieved at a very low academic level.

Fig. 1. Comparison of Grade Average of Students Suspended First and Second Semesters



Grades were computed for 44 students for the first semester. Based on four points for a grade of A, three points for a grade of B, two points for a grade of C, one point for a grade of D, and 0 points for a grade of E, the grade point average for the group was .59. The grade point average for the same group for the second semester, using the same letter grade weights was .73 for an increase of 23.7 percent. It should be noted that the grade

point average computation was based on all students suspended from class and not just the students suspended out-of-school. While improvement in academic grade point average was not dramatic, some improvement in academic progress can be atributed to the internal suspension program. Nine students increased their average by one letter grade while only three students regressed by one letter grade. Thirty-two students had no change in their performance. The program was successful in meeting Objective Number 4.

Procedurally, the practicum was conducted according to a well researched plan of action. All participants performed their responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. The most limiting factor in the conduct of the practicum was the lack of time. Time was inadequate to plan the project prior to its implementation. The comparison period of one semester was also inadequate to secure the most reliable data on the effects of internal suspension. The effects of this limitation were reflected in the magnitude of referrals to the IS program. Continued experience with the internal suspension program into the 1978-79 school year has already resulted in a dramatic decrease in referrals. This can be attributed to more mature experience and preparation resulting from the program's implementation the prior year.

For less than $6000 a promising program was obtained, as practicum results will attest. An evaluation was presented to the State Department of Human Resources at the end of the project period. During the summer of 1978, the writer was notified of the extension of the program for the 1978-79 fiscal year, and the program was subsequently extended with both state and local funds. It is anticipated that the program will be extended to the middle school grades at some future time when funds are available.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The rationale supporting every disciplinary action is twofold. First the action should attempt to modify the individual's future behavior. Second, it must protect others in the school environment. The internal suspension program satisfies the above requirements and adds a third dimension by protecting the community from delinquent behavior that might occur during the unsupervised time of regular external suspension.

The internal suspension program is a creative and flexible alternative to the traditional methods of school discipline. The writer maintains that the internal suspension program forces the student under suspension to examine the reason for his referral and to determine whether he/she wishes to avoid the situation in the future. Furthermore, the period of internal suspension gives the student experience in coping with different areas of the academic program that were difficult for him/her and forces him/her to do academic work that would not have been done under the traditional out-of-school suspension.

Finally, the writer asserts that the internal suspension program offers a bridge instead of a break in the educational process and broadens the curriculum for a selected group of students by focusing on behavior and modifying and channeling improper behavior into a more positive direction.

Recommendations

The obvious drawback to the internal suspension program is the money required for a coordinator's salary and the classroom space, often for a limited

number of students, when space and money are often in short supply. Other needs could obviously be met for these and other students with these resources if the program was discontinued. However, the writer feels that these resources can be justified when one considers the less tangible costs to the community as a result of misdemeanors committed be suspended students, largely unsupervised during out-of-school suspension. With internal suspension, regular classes are allowed to proceed normally without the disruptive element of a few students.

The writer recommends that adequate classroom space be provided in a satisfactory location in the school. The present internal suspension program operates in a facility too small for accommodating the load and inadequate to provide for individualized needs. The room should not be in a congested area near the administrative office.

The internal suspension program needs to be redefined by the administration for all faculty members. The program became a "catch-all" facility and teachers had a tendency to refer problems which should normally be handled by the teacher. There was also evidence that some teachers shifted the entire responsibility for the student to the IS coordinator and provided little assistance in continuing class assignments for students assigned to internal suspension. The writer recommends that an evaluation of this practice be made and that a system be developed to insure that the discipline of students and their continued academic development be a shared responsibility.

The writer recommends that consideration be given to making internal suspension a part-time experience for some students and certain offenses. A personality conflict between a teacher and a student may result in full-time suspension for a specified number of days when a limited referral might just

as well serve the purpose of removing the student from the classroom. A closer working relationship between the teacher and the IS coordinator is required in a limited assignment program, and the counseling component may become even more important in correcting the problem. Again, a facility to individualize the program is a necessary program ingredient.

The writer recommends the continuation of the internal suspension program. Although the program has a number of components which could be improved, the writer suggests that the program has demonstrated its value as an integral part of the process of behavior management at Tarboro High School. Efforts to further develop the program should be continued through periodic evaluation.

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APPENDIX

INTERNAL SUSPENSION REFERRAL FORM

TARBORO HIGH SCHOOL

Name _____ Year: Fr. Soph. Jr. Sr.

Number of days assigned to Internal Suspension _____

Dates: From _____ To _____

Any violation of rules listed below will result in either extended time in the Internal Suspension center or an external suspension or dismissal from school.

Rules for Students

1. Absolutely no talking except to the coordinator.
2. No gum or snacks.
3. Ample supplies and materials must be brought to the center each morning along with all textbooks that have been issued.
4. If library material is needed the student will inform the coordinator and he will pick up the material needed.
5. The student must report at 8:20 in the morning and remain until 3:05 each afternoon.
6. There is to be no contact with other students during the day and each student, in the center, is forbidden to participate in any school function.
7. All assigned work will be completed and turned in to the coordinator. This work must be neat and complete or else it is to be done over. After the coordinator has accepted the assignment it will then be turned over to the subject teacher for grading and/or recording.
8. Students are to be working at all times on appropriate subject matter assigned by the subject teacher.
9. All I. S. students will eat lunch at 1:15 with the coordinator and return to the I. S. center.
10. Students will leave the school grounds immediately when dismissed from the Internal Suspension Center at 3:05.

Coordinator's evaluation of student conduct and behavior during time assigned to the I. S. Center.

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Internal Suspension Coordinator